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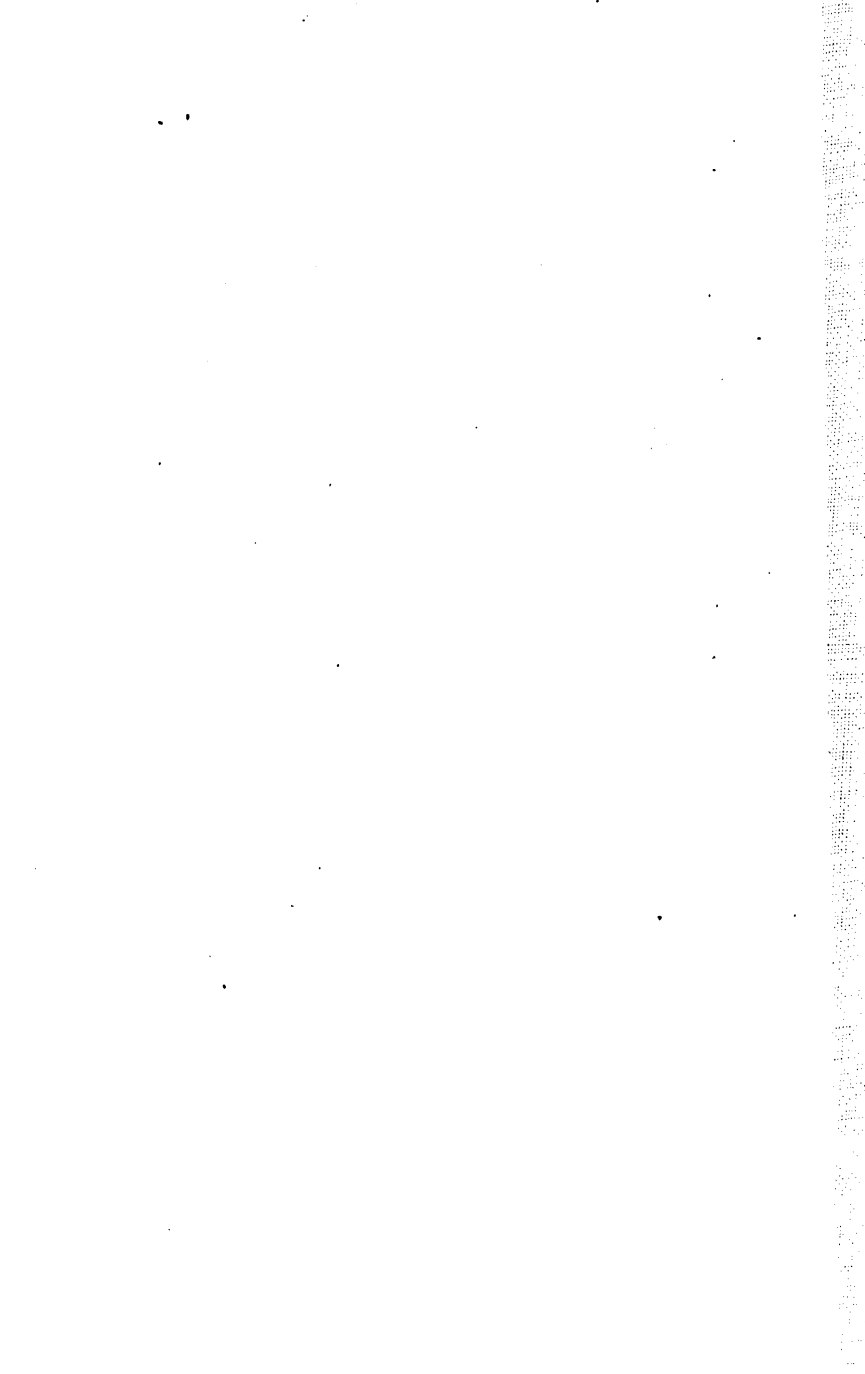
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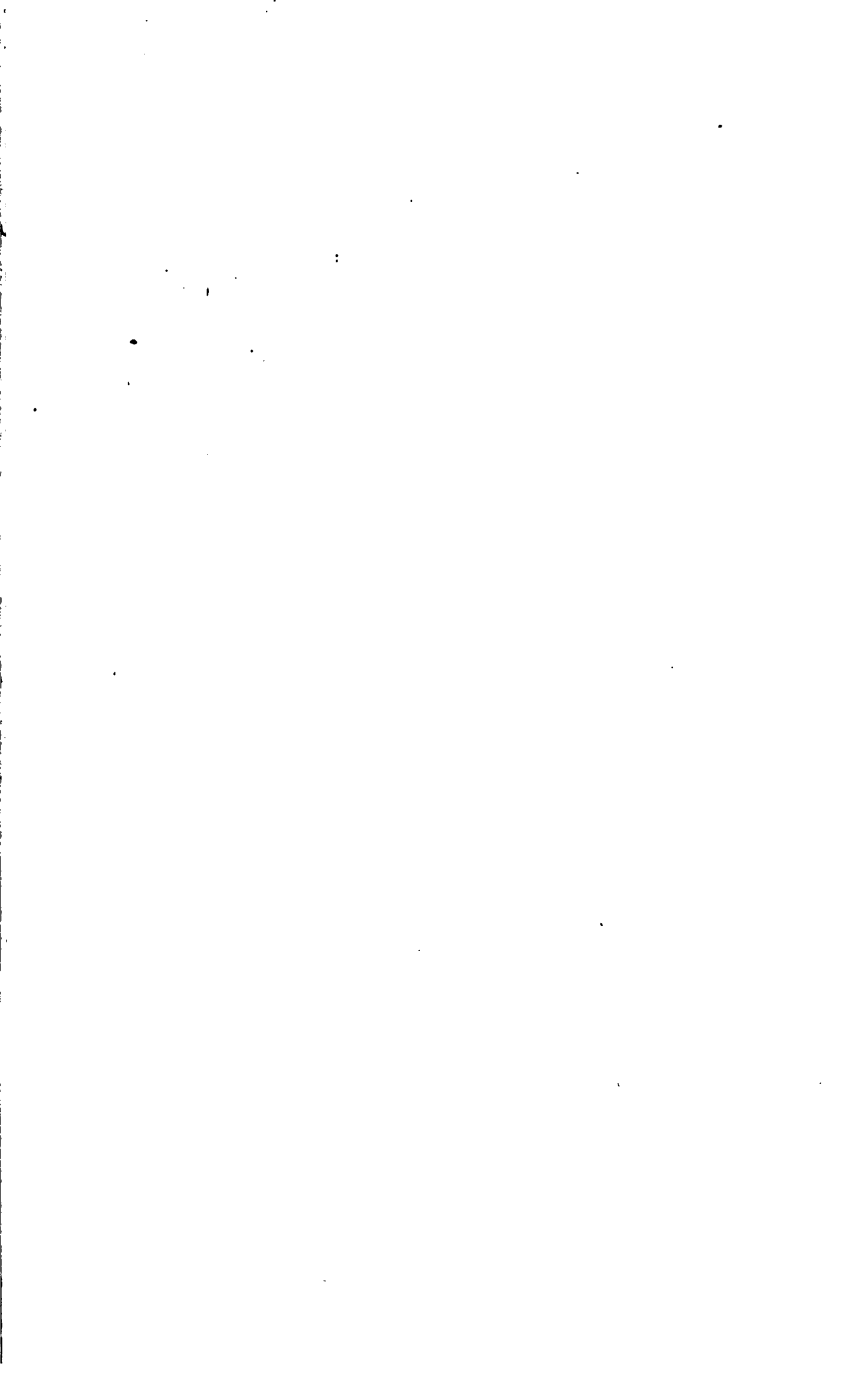


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The Voice of the Nation
and Other Verse

The Voice of the Nation

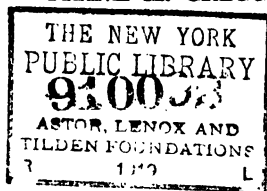
and Other Verse

BY
FRANK M. GREGG



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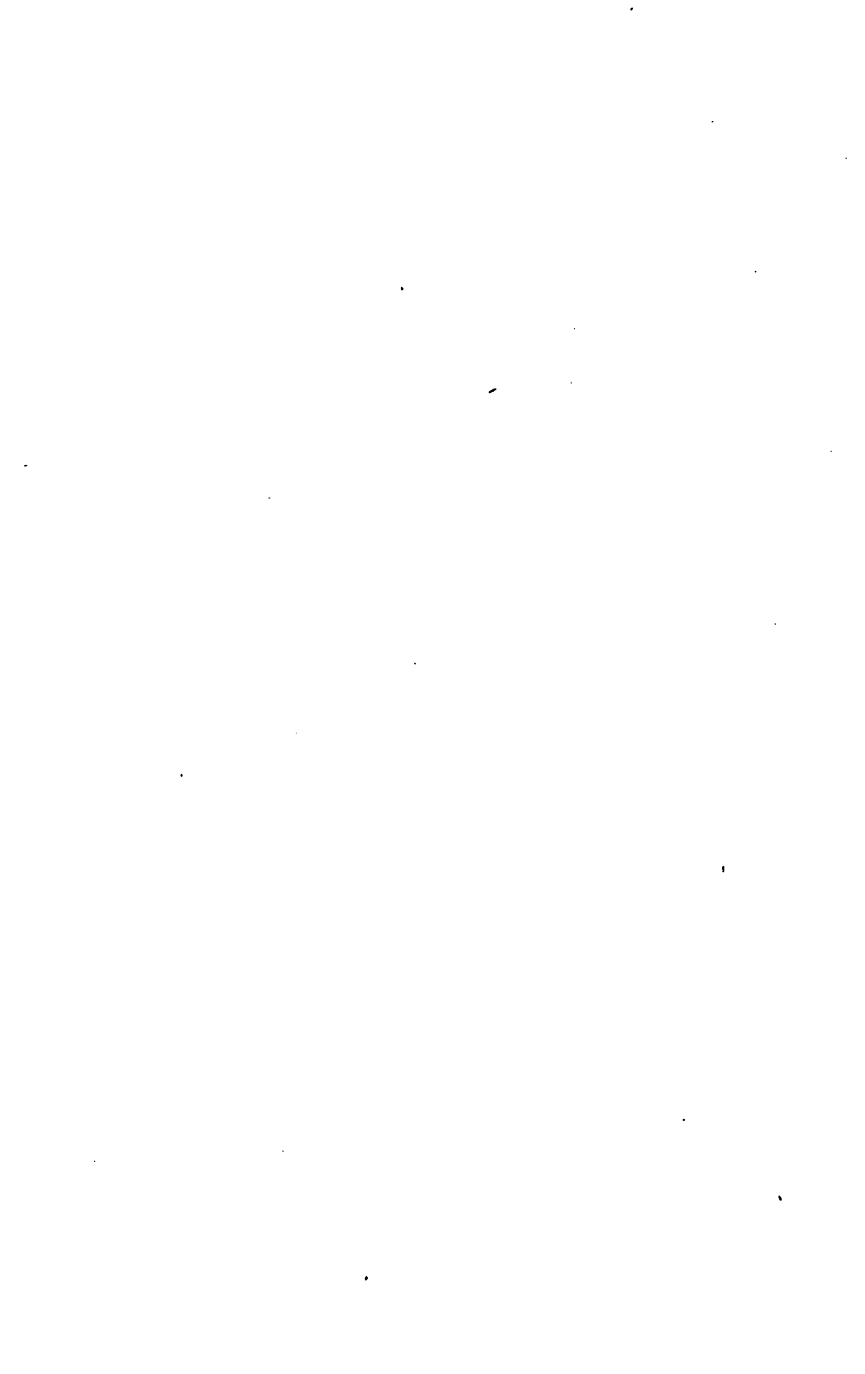
To My Soldier Boy
IN FRANCE
WHO AT NINETEEN
HEARD AND ANSWERED THE CALL
OF HUMANITY

FOREWORD

PROSE-RHYTHM is as old as David, still as new and fresh as each passing moment. It has no definite technique. Its imagery may be as excessive as poetry of the early Victorian, or as void of color as the dullest prose. Its language may be stilted or easy, scholastic or of the people. It is this wide range which makes it so possible to embrace all readers.

Not only does phrase-rhythm make composition simple, but thinking as well. Most people are one idea thinkers. By isolating one phrase with one idea enables this form of expression to be read rapidly and easily understood. That it is perfect or even new is not at issue. Whatever position the form may have, its one useful objective is to carry power of poetic imagery.

F. M. G.



CONTENTS

OLD ENGLAND.	11
VERDUN.	13
OUR SOLDIER BOY	14
THIS BATTERED WORLD	15
THE AEROPLANE.	19
THE SUBMARINE	22
ADIEU! ADIEU!	23
I AM THE VOICE OF THE NATION.	26
OUR BOYS IN FRANCE	33
THE CATAclysm	34
JOFFRE	38
GETTYSBURG, AN EPIC.	43
GRANT'S TOMB	95
LINCOLN	96
THE HUMAN CODE	96



OLD ENGLAND

GIVE us your hand
Old England;
Your grip is true
We believe in you,
Brave England.

* * *

You are a little bluff
Sturdy England;
But the Union Jack
Has never turned back,
Gruff England.

* * *

You have policed the world
Strong England;
But where you have been
You have brought justice in,
Square England.

* * *

You are pure Anglo-Saxon
Righteous England;

THE VOICE OF THE NATION

You are a lover of right
And a hater of might,
Glorious England.

* * *

You have measured up
Bold England;
You have done your bit
With bull dog grit,
Splendid England.

* * *

You have a strong heart
Valiant England;
You gave blow for blow
At Mons and Le Cateau
Courageous England.

* * *

We are at your side
Fearless England;
Here is the grip of a friend
Who will go to the end,
Our England.

AND OTHER VERSE

VERDUN

STAND fast, ye men of France, stand
fast!

Stand fast on your holy soil.
Though shells are raining,
And the enemy gaining,
Thou shalt not be his spoil.
Stand fast, ye men of France, stand fast!

* * *

Stand fast, ye men of France, stand fast!
Stand fast though the days be dark
In these fateful hours,
Hover unseen powers,
Remember the maid of d'Arc, Jean
d'Arc.
Stand fast, ye men of France, stand fast!

* * *

Stand fast, ye men of France, stand fast,
Stand fast for the shock must be met,
Though the enemy mass,
"They shall not pass,"

THE VOICE OF THE NATION

Remember the faith of Lafayette, Lafay-
ette.

Stand fast, ye men of France, stand fast.

* * *

Stand fast, ye men of France, stand fast,
Stand fast on your hills of fame,
The world is black,
If ye turn back,
And freedom becomes but a name.
Stand fast, ye men of France, stand fast.

OUR SOLDIER BOY

YOU saw a light in your soldier's eye,
Born not of his passing years;
But from a full resolve to die,
A high resolve above his fears.

You saw him bear aloft this light
And all the world could see,
As he went forth to make his fight
With the hosts of liberty.

You heard a new note in his voice,
A calm, but full souled tone,

AND OTHER VERSE

He answered to the call of choice,
With a conscience all his own.

His spirit light is leaping high,
In France these wondrous days,
We pray all dangers pass him by,
To him, no parting of the ways.

THIS BATTERED WORLD

WHAT shall we do
With our battered world,
Torn and twisted
Soaking with blood.
Shrieking in anger,
Wild with strife,
Groaning from anguish
Blinded with tears.



Shall we refashion
This battered world,
For lords and ladies,
Kings and queens,
And pampered few?

THE VOICE OF THE NATION

Restore feudal castles
On green hill tops,
Strongholds for barons
And their pirate crews?

* * *

Shall we rebuild
Cities and towns,
Around flaming stacks,
And towering mills;
Where gaunt poverty
Hovers around,
Taking its toll
Of human lives?

* * *

Shall we rebuild
This battered world,
Into nations
Exalting their power;
Scheming and striving,
Ambitious and cruel,
Running amuck
'Midst their weaker friends?

* * *

Shall we make
It easy,

AND OTHER VERSE

For the few
To gather and reap.
To be complacent
Midst withering famine;
To be content,
Whilst bodies are breaking,
Children groaning
And mothers weeping;
Crushed with hunger,
Starving in soul?

* * *

Let us all make a world,
That's ample and gracious.
Abundant of living
Warmth in plenty,
Food without stint.
A place of contentment,
Wholesome and kindly.
Where children may laugh
And women smile.

* * *

Let us all make a world
For people,
Instead of things.
Where good fortune smiles

THE VOICE OF THE NATION

Perpetually;
Where heaven's air
Breathes sweetly;
And earth's flowers
Blossom fairly,
Where all are blessed,
And the spirit big.



Let us make a world
Plenteous in mercy,
Bountiful in justice,
Large in its love.
Both arms extended
Gracious and kindly
Enfolding the weak,
Withholding the strong.
Out of the ampleness,
Out of its riches
Out of abundance,
Let us refashion the world
For all, for all.

AND OTHER VERSE

THE AEROPLANE

WITH the wings of an eagle
And the brains of a man,
The cloth pinioned bird rises to flight.
It turns and quivers,
Then glides atop the breeze;
A floating creature,
That rises with the sun.

* * *

This winged bird of cloth and steel,
Finds solace in the winds.
Above the ground it hovers,
Then mounts to heights,
Where the boldest eagle,
Dare not follow,
And never falls nor falters.
Down spiral pathways with gliding
wings,
Through abysses of silent air,
Drops and darts as though a living thing.

* * *

Across the sky it loops its way,
With burnished wings outspread;
Now down, now up,

THE VOICE OF THE NATION

Athwart the breeze,
It scurries like a frightened hawk.
It turns, then straight ahead,
Its flight resumes,
Beating forward with virile wings.

* * *

Within the misty fold of lapping clouds,
Soars this bird imperial,
Straying into clamorous fields,
And into windy breakers;
When piling clouds are torn apart,
By lightnings and explosions.
Nor yet turns it aside,
If treacherous blasts leap forth,
To crush it by their violence.
With beak aloft and head erect
Haughty, imperious, it plunges on;
Challenging the eternal winds,
Upon their native stretches.

* * *

With beak of steel and eyes aflash,
Claws bare and glistening,
A lonely war-bird sails the sky,
Knight-errant of the fleecy clouds.
Another bird of cloth and steel

AND OTHER VERSE

Adown the misty air deeps
Seeks and searches for its prey.
Wings outstretched and ruffled breast
Man's anger guiding,
They charge in fluttering combat.
Amidst the chase,
They glide, turn, and twist,
Shudder and quiver.
They dive and fall, then climb,
Showing steeled talons:
Chattering fiery beaks.
With brains alert and courage big;
Eyes that watch but dare not waver;
Spirits that brave impending perils
With the calmness of undaunted souls;
These warrior birds wage their combat
Amidst the wisp-like clouds.

* * *

Slanting down the twilight air,
Homeward flies the human eagle,
Gold and gleaming in the setting sun.
Its wings drooping, shattered,
Its plumage ruffled;
Whirring, screaming
With beak and talons bloody;

THE VOICE OF THE NATION

Still crying victorious,
A fierce song, that birds and men alike
Do chant, when victors in their elements.

THE SUBMARINE

HIDING, secretive, murderous pirate,
Evil spirit of the sea,
Sunk neath noxious waters,
Bolts of steel and destruction,
Thrusting on thy victim unaware.
Down midst slimy weeds and serpents,
Toiling in thy sinuous way,
There thy native lair calls thee,
Haunts of blackness and despair.

* * *

Reeling through the rolling billows,
Wallowing in the troughs of seas,
Like a serpent smooth and shining,
Lurking, hiding in the tempests,
Waiting for thy victim's blood.
Squids, and sharks, and slimy eels,
Are thy comrades, of the caves,
Green and limpid moss and sea weeds,
Form the tresses of thy brood.

AND OTHER VERSE

ADIEU! ADIEU!

OUR first soldiers who went "West,"
were Corporal Gresham, Privates
Enright and Hay. A French general
pronouncing the funeral oration, closed
with this simple tribute: "Corporal
Gresham, Private Enright, Private Hay,
in the name of France I thank you. God
receive your souls, Adieu."

* * *

There's a cry in the night
As of a spirit afright
From the soul of a nation at bay:
A call for aid
To hearts unafraid,
To friends of an ancient day.
"Corporal Gresham, are you ready?"
"Here!" he answers, "here and ready."

* * *

From across the sea
Come cries of agony,
As from the throats of our own;

THE VOICE OF THE NATION

A human appeal
Our hearts to unseal,
And to leap on to fields shell sown.
"Private Enright, are you ready?"
"Here!" he answers, "here and ready."

* * *

Aid us with thy might,
In this great fight,
Cried France to her ancient friend;
It was her will
To suffer still,
If needs to the bitter end.
"Private Hay, are you ready?"
"Here!" he answers, "here and ready."

* * *

The French village street,
Echoes to marching feet,
Of our men who answered the call;
Stalwart and straight
With a swinging gait,
Whom battle scenes could not appall.
"Corporal Gresham?" "Here!"
"Private Enright?" "Here!"
"Private Hay?" "Here!"

AND OTHER VERSE

Then showers of shell,
Made a perfect hell,
Tearing the trenches to shreds;
In the dawn's early light
They made their last fight,
While a pall over their comrades spreads.

* * *

No toll of a bell,
Sounded their knell,
As their comrades stood at review;
France her spirit revealed
In this hallowed field,
While her general bid them adieu.

* * *

"Corporal Gresham, adieu!
Private Enright, adieu!
Private Hay, adieu!
In the name of France, I thank you,
May God receive you.
Adieu! Adieu! Adieu!"

THE VOICE OF THE NATION

I AM THE VOICE OF THE NATION

I AM the voice of the nation,
I am the spirit of the people,
My speech is a sacred word
The language of the soul.
I am all the people,
All their lives and thoughts,
Their justice, courage, and their wrath.
I am power, I am weakness,
My cry is one of anguish,
My song a simple melody,
My tears a kindly sympathy.
I am you in justice,
You in selfishness;
I am you glorified,
You besotted.
Out of God's being
I receive my living word.
I am God
When I speak in fairness;
I am the devil
When I speak in greed.
I am you,
You, are I,

AND OTHER VERSE

We are one,
I am the voice of the nation.

* * *

I am the voice of the nation.
I speak,
And all the people hearken.
No tempest's blast
Can drown my wrath
Nor silence my indignation.
To those who know me best
To those who understand the least,
I speak in the same commanding tones,
Demanding their attention.
It rings within the rich man's gates
It reaches to the hovel.
No strongholds are shut to me,
My voice commands,
Straightway the gates are opened.
Mine is the power irresistible,
Its might is yours,
From you received.
Exalted, just;
We will;
Lo! 'tis done.

* * *

THE VOICE OF THE NATION

I am the voice of the nation.
Imperious men quail,
When I break forth
In fierce denunciation.
Mine is the will to build,
Theirs to ruin.
I seek for justice
They for power.
I seize the strong,
They the weak;
I seek the good of all
They go forth to plunder.
I cry aloud.
As jungle beasts
They drop their prey;
They seize it again
And make off;
I cry once more,
They slink away into
Their dens.
I speak,
All who worship at justice's shrine
Lift up their voices
And shout aloud with me.

* * *

AND OTHER VERSE

I am the voice of the nation.
Indignant, wrathful,
Shouting my battle cry:
"To arms! To arms!
Hear ye not the tyrant's hammers,
Forging shackles,
For ye and me!
Hear ye not the call of peoples,
Far spent in their fight,
For liberty!
Arise ye! Arise ye!"
I shout my wrongs
From the mountain tops,
Each hurrying wind bears their shrill
notes,
Across the wide prairies.
From sea to sea,
From north to south,
I cry the alarm,
Startling my peaceful people.

* * *

Behold my glorious children,
Outpouring by the myriads,
From over my dominions.
They come,

THE VOICE OF THE NATION

Trooping from mill and farm,
From cabin and crowded city;
They come from out the ground
And from the waving forests.
They come;
Asking no reasons why
But that I called;
Rising like a tidal host
Plighting their faith to me.
They come;
With honest, eager faces,
Singing battle hymns of freedom,
Rejoicing, shouting,
"Lead us on! Lead us on!"

* * *

I am the voice of the nation
Tender as a mother with her children,
And I say to each of them;
Ye shall weep
But I will sorrow with thee.
Ye shall pray,
But I will kneel beside thee.
Ye shall be lonely
But I will abide with thee.
We must walk together

AND OTHER VERSE

You and I;
Down into the valley,
Into the mists and shadows.

* * *

I am the voice of the nation.
Standing upon the city docks,
Crying farewell
To my brave youth!
"Go forth to victory,
Be strong, be brave,
Strike with all thy might.
Fill in the gaps of breaking lines,
Fly to places of danger,
Seek posts for fighting men;
Be there, be everywhere,
Be of good courage,
God be with thee.

* * *

"Go forth to victory
Carrying freedom's banner.
Let no foul deeds
Besmirch it.
See only the right
And follow it,

THE VOICE OF THE NATION

Without fault or fear.
God keep thee.

* * *

"Go forth to victory my children,
Victory of people,
Victory of peace,
Lasting victory,
Righteous victory;
God give thee victory."

* * *

Mighty nation! Glorious people!
Hearest thou the anthem,
Sounding from across the sea:
"America we hail thee!
Strong in justice,
Great in patience,
Zealous of peace;
All hail America!"

* * *

Mighty nation! Glorious people!
Hearest thou the anthem,
Sounding from across the sea
"America we praise thee!
Unselfish people,

AND OTHER VERSE

Chivalrous people,
People unafraid;
We praise thee, America!"

* * *

Mighty nation! Glorious people!
Hearest thou the anthem,
Rising from across the sea:
"America we thank thee,
America we love thee,
America we bless thee;
God keep thee ever free
America!"

OUR BOYS IN FRANCE

THE sun never sets on our boys in
France,
Though night clouds on hills are
descending,
For the light of love from their mother's
hearts
Sends radiant beams that are never
ending.

Across the sea, is a luminous way
Endless with lights that are glowing

THE VOICE OF THE NATION

For the spirit light of a nation's prayers,
Is a stream, that is ever flowing.

There's the sparkling flash of stars in the
 night,
Eternal sparks in the heavens are gleam-
 ing,
But the stars that float over our boys'
 heads
Are their soul fires, with a burning
 meaning.

The sun never sets on our boys in France,
For through the night there comes
 stealing,
The glow of a spirit, out of the west,
A nation's heart fondly revealing.

THE CATAclysm

REMEMBEREST thou:
 When the world was peaceful
 And men were amassing wealth,
 When the vicious and greedy,

AND OTHER VERSE

Were thinking alone of self?
Then the world was stale,
Corrupt and overfed,
Like a sordid courtesan,
Whose cheeks were painted red.

Knowest thou :

That women decked with jewels,
Danced and drank the dregs of wine,
Whilst they thought only of pleasure
And ate their shucks with swine?
Then the world was stale,
Corrupt and overfed,
Like a sordid courtesan,
Whose cheeks were painted red.

Heedest thou :

When the youth went forth in the
evening
To dance 'til the early morn,
With half dressed damsels of fashion,
Laughing modesty to scorn?
Then the world was stale,
Corrupt and overfed,
Like a sordid courtesan,
Flaunting her cheeks of red.

THE VOICE OF THE NATION

Livest thou:

When the church was looking back-
wards
Just singing and marking time,
When the crowds passed by its portals,
Intent, on their own design?
Then the world was stale,
Corrupt and overfed,
Like a sordid courtesan,
Whose cheeks were painted red.

Movest thou:

When the state no longer was active
In the things that aided men,
But was tricked by ambitious leaders
Into working their vicious end?
Then the world was stale,
Corrupt and overfed,
Like a sordid courtesan,
Whose cheeks were painted red.

Hearkest thou:

In the days of war's alarm,
When the soul of France stood at bay
At Verdun like a bulwark,
Holding back the flood tide of gray?
Then the world was not stale,

AND OTHER VERSE

Nor had honor fled,
But strong hearts had risen
Where the trenches ran red.

Stirrest thou:

When the nation's call to arms
Came thundering across the sea,
When with righteous indignation
We joyously answered the plea?
Then the world was real,
And the world was true,
For its spirit was noble
And was born anew.

Sayest thou:

'Twere not better our youth were
marble,
Cold on the fields of France,
Than living the vicious existence
Of the days of the tango dance?
Now the world is strong
And stands forth aright,
Through those who have fallen,
In the thick of the fight.

Amen! and Amen!

To these men.

THE VOICE OF THE NATION

JOFFRE

HIGH on a rugged mountain side
A sturdy Oak faced the storms,
Whilst poplars, elms and singing pines,
Were soothed by each whispering breeze,
Caressing the valley of the Pyrenees.

* * *

Down on the plains of sunny France,
Rich with meadows, and fertile fields,
People drifted 'neath cloudless skies,
Like gentle zephyrs 'mid languid trees,
Unheeding the Oak of the Pyrenees.

* * *

Out of the north black clouds rolled,
Scurried across the peaceful sky.
Mounting shadows like gaunt fingers,
Seized this land of dreamy ease,
Shook the Oak of the Pyrenees.

* * *

Tocsin of war crashing
Sounding its warnings,
Shaking the earth.
Flood tide of cannon,

AND OTHER VERSE

Flood tide of men,
Flow out of the north.
Gaunt spectres advancing,
Mumbling and calling;
All Europe topsy turvy,
Governments falling,
Hurly burly the world;
Granite fortresses crumbling,
Cities burning,
Armies fleeing pell mell.

* * *

Onward swept the fiery tempest,
Blasting and leveling, crushing and
grinding,
Burning the fields like a flaming torch,
France was fleeing, down on her knees
Pleading to the Oak of the Pyrenees

* * *

"Arise Ye!" Cried the heart of Oak,
"Men of Lyons! Men of Havre!
Paris, Lille and Bordeaux!
Ye men of the north! men of the south!
Men of the nation, mén of France!
To arms! To arms! the foemen come
They will not knock, but boldly enter

THE VOICE OF THE NATION

Your fields and forests, hills and plains.
Arise Ye! Smite them lest ye die.

* * *

"Thou Castelnau hold the eastern gates,
Epinal, Belfort and Verdun!
Ye French block the way at Courtrai!
Britons of old, ye warriors bold
Hold fast to Mons and Le Cateau!
Stand all, like bulwarks of granite strong,
Keep back the foe, wall in the flood,
Lest France perish 'neath the storm."

* * *

But all in vain the heart of Oak
Cried to his valiant men of arms,
Fertile fields were overrun,
Strongholds fell at every side,
France was buried 'neath the tide.

* * *

Crowning hills the foemen stormed,
And swept on through the valleys;
Fortresses of old proved merely clay,
Bulwarks builded of granite and rock,
Tottered and fell 'neath the battle shock.

* * *

AND OTHER VERSE

With triumphal tread of conquerors
Imperious war lords led the way,
Crushing Britons, French and Belgians,
Wrenched them asunder, tore them apart,
Marching straight to the country's heart.

* * *

Woe be to Paris, woe be to France,
Ground beneath the victor's heel,
As the warrior hosts swept on.
France was bleeding, all in dread,
But France was rising from the dead.

* * *

Again cried the Oak of the Pyrenees:
"Ye men of France! Arise!
Thy avenging day is here.
Fear not nor falter,
Tis better that ye die
And let France live,
Than that ye live
And let France die.
Strike men of France! Strike!"

* * *

France arose, flaming, radiant,
Struck with livid unsheathed sword,

THE VOICE OF THE NATION

Struck at the heart of the moving hosts,
Flew at the throats of the gray invaders.
Rent their battle line asunder,
Flung them back across the Marne,
Afar to the hill tops of the Aisne.
The soul of France arose triumphant,
France had risen, France was saved.

* * *

France of old was full ablaze,
Burning with her ancient courage,
Towering high in fiery glory,
Righteous wrath, and splendid rage,
Spirit of the rising age.

* * *

Once again the sun is shining,
Shining on the hills of France,
Once again the winds are blowing,
Tossing branches of ancient trees,
Caressing the Oak of the Pyrenees.

AND OTHER VERSE

GETTYSBURG

AN EPIC

PRELUDE

JUNE was abroad with resplendent
days,
Burnishing the round tops of the Blue
Ridges
With velvet leaves of oak and elms;
Tinting the Virginia primal forests,
Like filmy rainbows on the virgin hills.
In hidden valleys cradled between
Green virile grass was flowing
As silken folds,
Around the isles of slumbering pines.
Drugged was the air,
Drowsy with sweetness of the south
winds,
Draining the blossoms of fragrant forests.

* * *

Silent were the mountains,
Quiet were the hills,
Except for the distant notes,
Of soft throated thrushes;
Or dronings of gold-winged bees,

THE VOICE OF THE NATION

Wandering nomads in this land of ease.
Murmuring and slipping through the
 mosses,
Glided a singing brook,
Falling in silver eddies,
Around shadowed rocks;
Where crimson azaleas nodded,
And laurels with gentle rhythm swayed.
Land of languid June,
Drowsy with silence and contentment,
There was calmness,
There was peace.

* * *

K'lup! K'lup! K'lup!
Clang! Clang! Clang!
Insistent and strident;
Noisy and vicious,
Echoed and re-echoed,
Through this land of ease.
Suddenly upon the quiet,
Broke the clatter of hoofs,
Galloping swiftly down the roadway.
Clang! Clang!
Sounded the metallic scabbards,
Of the squadron of armed men,

AND OTHER VERSE

Cantering down into the hollow.
Across the silvery brook they rode,
Crushed the flaming azaleas,
Broke the plumed laurels,
Splashed the silvered waters.
On the troops rode, singing lightly,
While death was slung across their backs,
And death lurked in their shining scabbards.

K'lup!—K'lup!—K'lup!
Clang!—Clang!—Clang!
Receded the clatter of horses' hoofs,
Far away sounded the scabbards,
Into the distance fading.

* * * * *
* * * * *

THE ADVANCE

Through Chester Gap
Into the Valley of the Shenandoah
Poured the gray flood.
Out of the distance came
Martial sounds,
Blended and wrought together;
Filled the air
Resounded throughout the land,

THE VOICE OF THE NATION

Echoed with confusion.

There was the tramp, tramp of many
men,

Loud calling of jubilant voices,

Neighing of spirited chargers;

And light laughter of armed youth,

Joyous in their martial pride.

Dull rumblings of heavy cannon,

Hoarse cries of teamsters,

Creaking of white covered wagons,

Bellowing cattle, bleating sheep,

Mingled with the beating of interminable
feet.

Dust covered veterans strode along care-
lessly,

Stragglers edged into the woods wearily,

Silent officers rode along negligently,

Moving at ease.

Furled were the battle flags,

Silent were fife and drum;

Martial display turned drab, lusterless.

From underfoot the dust arose,

And spread into the sky;

A trail of yellow overhead,

As though the martial hosts,

Would set their seal upon the clouds

AND OTHER VERSE

As well as on the lowlands.
So marching infantry, cavalry, and
artillery
Moved rapidly, steadily;
Surged forward to the banks of the
Potomac,
Wound itself sinuously over its bed;
Singing with one voice, "Maryland, My
Maryland."
Thus the Army of Virginia entered the
valley,
Spread over the plains of the Cumber-
land.

* * *

Exultant was the Southland,
Strong in its pride,
Sure in its victory.
Lee, the warrior, bold, audacious,
Urged his veterans onward,
Hopeful to overwhelm the Northland.

* * *

Doubtful and timid,
Halting and fearful,
Were the people of the Union;
Hoping and praying,

THE VOICE OF THE NATION

Searching and seeking,
Crying aloud for a leader.

* * * * *
* * * * *

PRELUDE TO THE FIRST DAY'S FIGHT

"Be cautious! be cautious!"
Whispered the wire from Washington;
"Be careful! be careful!"
Beat the heart of the Nation,
To Meade the Union commander.
The Blue troops pressed forward,
Hot, thirsty, tired and excited.
By the light of the stars
Long columns of marching men
Trailed across the rugged country.
Artillery filled the fields,
Horsemen blocked the by-ways;
Houses were lighted,
Countrymen lined the way,
Children with flowers,
Women with fragrant coffee.
Aged men aided the footsore,
Cheered the faint hearted,
Exulted in the courageous.
The night was as the day,

AND OTHER VERSE

Filled with constant tramping,
Of men who would not tarry.

* * *

Brigades, divisions moved
Like willing pieces on the checkerboard,
Of hills and valleys.
Halted, advanced,
Filled the lowlands here,
Stood upon the hill tops yonder.
A guiding spirit,
Secret, wise, discerning,
In the darkness of the night,
Took the marching hosts in hand.
Led them through the shadows,
Placed them near the field of battle,
Brought them ready for the conflict,
'Gainst the planning of their leaders.

* * *

Across the west
Stretched South Mountain,
A screen of shadowy hills.
Out of the depths
Sparkled and flamed Lee's camp fires
Like fire flies over evening meadows.
Marsh Creek's mists rose a filmy curtain,

THE VOICE OF THE NATION

Quivering golden from the bivouac,
Of Meade's sleeping army.
Sentinels in blue,
Sentinels in gray,
Walked their lonely posts;
Saw the maze of playing lights,
Evil portents of the morrow.

* * *

Willoughby Run was placid,
Peacefully flowing,
'Neath the arch stone bridge.
Willoughby Run was rising,
As a flood,
Surging into history's pages.
A pastoral monument,
Like Concord's bridge,
Raised in the hearts of grateful people.
Above the quiet brook,
Walked a picket,
Lonely in his morning watch.
Shadowy wisps arose from tepid waters;
Out of the groves,
Came the matin chorus of the birds.
Down the silence of the morning,
Echoed the sound of horses' hoofs,

AND OTHER VERSE

Beating on the stony road.
Quickened, alert,
Crouched the blue picket,
Close to the parapet of the bridge.
There's a flash from the ridge,
There's a flash from the bridge,
Two evil forked tongues,
Two leaping fires,
That ran awild,
Lighting heroes' funeral pyres.
Flash lights two,
Raising the blood red curtain,
Of the battle drama, Gettysburg.

* * * * *

* * * * *

THE FIRST DAY'S FIGHT

Into the swirl of smoke,
Infantrymen feed the battle flame.
Into blasts of fire,
Artillerymen rush their cannon.
Through a curtain of dust,
Cavalrymen charge their way.
Into the *mélée* shouting, firing,
Hurried the blue,

THE VOICE OF THE NATION

Hurried the gray.
For the hosts are tossed into the hurly-
burly,
Hot from their toiling marches.
No leaders' mind had planned this fight
Undaunted courage now was master.

* * *

The Iron Brigade stood fast,
Advanced, closed in, and wrapped
Its line of blue around the line of gray.
Then forward surged the gray,
Then flashed the steel,
And blazed the streaked fire.
Bloody men hurled stones,
And struck each other with clenched
fists,
With the turmoil of hatred in their souls.
Clinched and staggering the two lines
held,
Like baffled wrestlers of even strength.

* * *

So the two armies lay panting,
Beneath the July sun,
Watching and waiting.

AND OTHER VERSE

Reserves came to the blue
Hastened into line,
The battle fire flared forth.
Reserves came to the gray
Ewell fresh from York,
Ready and willing.
Outflanked the blue gave way
Snapped and fell apart,
A helpless mass of fleeing men.
A wild and frantic mob,
That cut free rearing horses
From shotted cannon;
Tore steeds from covered wagons,
Mounted and rode away.
That rushed pell mell through the
village,
Filled the streets from house to house;
Shrieking and crying,
Yelling and howling,
Pushing and shoving,
Strangling and choking
Comrades that blocked their way.
Primitive men,
Turned frenzied animals,
Saving themselves.

THE VOICE OF THE NATION

Behold the fleeing mob!
Behold the valiant fighters
Within the battle's crater,
Which flamed about them.
Their faces blackened
By sulphur's fumes,
Lips parched,
By the noonday's sun;
Overwhelmed but undismayed.
Who turned, halted, fired,
Like blazing demons leaving scorched
trails,
Across the hills and valleys;
As they fought on and on,
'Til the souls of fighting men,
Crowned them heroes of their own.

* * * * *
* * * * *

A REFRAIN

Ye war lords of the heavens,
When ye your warriors view,
Ye surely will remember,
The First Corps of the blue.
Ye may be proud of Caesar,
Napoleon and Marshal Ney,

AND OTHER VERSE

But none were ever braver,
Than the men of Doubleday.
They stood on embattled fields,
Like granite rocks steadfast;
And with unfaltering courage
They faced the cannon's blast.

They rallied in the twilight
When their support was gone,
And wavered not nor faltered,
'Til their bloody task was done.

Forced from the field of glory,
Before the rising flood,
They wrote their names on hill tops,
Made sacred by their blood.

Ye war lords of the heavens
Hear ye their battle cry?
Salute these gallant soldiers,
The First Corps passes by.

* * * * *
* * * * *

THE VOICE OF THE NATION

PRELUDE TO THE SECOND DAY'S BATTLE

Sun of the east, rise blood red,
And flood the hills and valleys,
For a crimson harvest is to be garnered.
Winds of the heavens, caress lightly
The boys from Georgia,
And forget not the boys in blue;
For thy night winds shall moisten their
cheeks,
By the light of the stars they shall be as
marble.
Blow ye silently through the Peach
Orchard,
Gently wave the grain in the Wheat
Field,
Dapple the waters of Plum Run,
Toss the leaves of the oaks upon Round
Tops,
Bathe the rocks of Devil's Den.
For the Peach Orchard shall be broken,
The Wheat Field trodden like adamant,
The rifts of Plum Run shall be red,
The aged oaks of the Round Tops shall
be shattered;

AND OTHER VERSE

The dull rocks of Devil's Den shall be-
come altars
On which men are sacrificed midst battle
flames.

* * *

Angels sable and black-winged,
Cast afar thy shadows,
For thy victims shall be legion.
They shall be the best of the land,
The choicest spirits of the
North, south, east, and west.
They shall charge in the low valley,
Amidst a hail of bullets,
A maelstrom of fire;
They shall meet brave men
Armed with glistening bayonets,
Who thrust, stab, and cut.
They shall leap into a cauldron,
A cauldron of burning sulphur,
Which boils, bubbles, and seethes;
Whose rising yellow fumes are
Punctured by red flashes of cannon.
Leaping fires of hate,
Whose long tongues sear,
Burn, blanch and knot,
The faces of brave men.

THE VOICE OF THE NATION

They shall go forth in the morning,
Not heedless, * :
But joyous in their sacrifice.
They shall go forth with the spirit of
God in their souls,
And the courage of men in their hearts,
To sacrificial, virile deaths.

* * *

Rise in the east, Oh Sun! round and
blood red,
Flood the hills and valleys;
For this day a crimson harvest is to be
garnered.

* * * * *
* * * * *

SECOND DAY'S BATTLE

General Lee sat astride Traveler,
Looking across the low valley
Planning the day's combat.
On the distant hills were cannon,
All in plain view,
Bristling and ready.
General Lee rode on,
Stopped, looked again and again,
Unable to plan the fighting.

AND OTHER VERSE

Suddenly drums beat,
Bugles sounded,
Battle flags waved in the winds.
Like a billow of the sea,
Advanced Sickles' blue line,
Leaving behind the fortress of the hills;
Advanced into the valley,
Halted and waited as blind victims
To be slaughtered.

* * *

No longer was Lee in doubt,
Nor deeply puzzled,
Nor could he long delay.
Artillery swung down the line,
Horses with distended nostrils,
Rushed guns to their positions.
Sheltered in bushy hollows,
Jubilant, exultant over the prospect,
Columns of gray marched double time;
Officers leading the way,
Through dense woods,
All secretive in their surprise.
All hurrying,
Making haste to spring the trap,
Ere their victims fled.

* * *

THE VOICE OF THE NATION

E'en as the tragedy waxed to its climax,
Unconscious of its fate, stood the blue line
Midst the peach orchard green with
fruit.

Helpless and hopeless,
It awaited the opening of the second act
Of the red drama, Gettysburg.

The curtain lifted with salvos of cannon.

Shells shattered the fruit trees,
Crushed men beneath an iron hail.

Suddenly from out of the forests
Charged the gray lines,
Yelling their battle cry.

The blue stood fast,
Defiantly held their ground,
Hurled back the gray hosts.

A veritable furnace was the Peach
Orchard

Leaping with fire,
Scorching with heat,
Beating with flames.

Men strove with fierceness
Dragging cannon by hand,
Fought like devils.

Foot by foot, the blues gave way,
Infantry holding behind artillery,

AND OTHER VERSE

Artillery fighting alone;
Splendid in sacrifice,
Magnificent in courage.

* * *

Out of the soul of the masses in blue,
Hard pressed and faltering,
Went forth a cry to their comrades in
arms:

“Reserves! Reserves from the Fifth
Corps!

Come to the rescue!
Come on the double quick;
Come into the valley of death!
Charge for your comrades' sake!
Charge for your country's sake!
Come to the rescue, men of the Fifth!”
Into the *mélée* rushed the reserves,
With muskets flashing,
Bayonets glistening,
And faces set for the fray;
But they availed not, availed not.

* * *

Out where the battle smoke was drifting
Over a field of grain,

THE VOICE OF THE NATION

The growing wheat waist high,
Ready for the sickle;
Lines of blue, lines of gray,
Leaped forth firing.
Stood in the open firing
Firing into each other's faces,
Threw down their muskets,
Leaped with rage at each other,
Fought like strong men,
Struggling to conquer or to die.
Back and forth,
The combat raged,
Making the growing grain,
Reek with the blood of the fallen.
Here there was no gorging, the battle
monster, as it
Raged and stormed for its victims,
Called aloud for more and more.
They came leaping with joy,
Shouted peans of victory,
Exalted life passionately,
Stalked death defiantly;
Flung themselves with ardor,
Into the conflict,
Raging and terrible.
Wheat Field, Wheat Field,

AND OTHER VERSE

Planted and trod by rustics, now
Draining the lives of heroes;
Thine is the soil of the poppy
Drugged roots draining the land
Made red by the blood of men.
The line of blue gave way,
Fell back, showed its fangs,
Confused but resolute.
But the fighting breed fought on.
A breed,
Of crashing musketry,
Bursting shells,
Clashing bayonets,
Of din of battle.
Resolute,
Determined,
Willful.
Eloquent in deeds,
Fearless in duty,
Courageous in danger,
Splendid in anger.
Midst the cataclysm of the wheat field,
The fighting breed fought on,
In clouds of smoke;
Stood steadfast,
'Till overwhelmed;

THE VOICE OF THE NATION

Fought to the death,
Never surrendered.

* * *

Again arose the urgent cry;
"Reserves! Reserves of the Sixth Corps
Come to the rescue!
Come on the double quick!
Come into the valley of death!
Come to the rescue, men of the Sixth!"

* * *

Fighting and holding,
Then holding no more
The men in the blue fell back.
Driven from the peach orchard,
Lost was the wheat field,
A débâcle of blood and terror,
A maelstrom of smoke;
Sucking down in its whirlpool,
Legions of brave men.
But the gray reserves came also.
And fires which might have consumed
Those who were fuel for the burning;
Burned yet more fiercely,
Fed from the thousands of waiting men,
Withered by the flames of battle.

AND OTHER VERSE

Through the rocks of Devil's Den
Swirled the battle's turmoil,
Dashed against the cliffs;
Beat and lashed like fiery breakers,
Leaping high and thundering
O'er the age worn lichen stones.
Each boulder a rampart made,
Each tree a covering,
Fighting barriers for the brave.
Waves of gray surged forward,
Broke, fell back,
Dashed up again;
A rising tide,
That overflowed the rugged rocks,
Submerged the thin drawn line of blue.

* * *

Over the smoke wreathed ridge,
Came the urgent call,
To the waiting Twelfth Corps:
"Reserves! Reserves! The Twelfth
Corps!
Come to the rescue!
Come on the double quick!
Down into the valley of death!
Come to the rescue, men of the Twelfth!"

* * *

THE VOICE OF THE NATION

Through the clouds of sulphur they
charged
Lavishing their courage,
Answering the cry of their comrades.
Still the blue gave way
Nor stayed 'til the crest,
Of the fortress ridge was reached.
Now in the twilight charged the grays,
Seeing the end of the battle,
Sounding the jubilant cry of victory.

* * *

Again rose the last cry
From the valiant hearts,
Of the unconquered:
"Reserves! Reserves of the Potomac!
To the rescue!
Come on the double quick!
Charge for your comrades' sake!
Charge for your country's sake!
Come to the rescue, men of the
Potomac!"
Men of faith,
Men of battle,
Veterans of a hundred combats,
Plunge in, plunge forward,
Ancestral spirits are calling,

AND OTHER VERSE

Hopes of people faltering;
Plymouth Rock is crumbling
Bunker Hill is trembling,
Forward! veterans, forward!
Courage of patriots,
Strength of justice,
Give you power.
Behold the gate of freedom
Open it wide,
With your lives;
What of a thousand lives
Given for raising people,
Over the crisis of the ages.
Forward! veterans, forward!
Inscribe your names forever,
On the scroll of a grateful world.

* * *

Out of the hurrying of men
Came the crash of musketry,
A flaming as though the crest were
burning.
Like a fire wave the veterans surged
forward,
Swept the gray line out of the Devil's
Den, across the wheat field,
Through the peach orchard.

THE VOICE OF THE NATION

In the twilight sat General Lee
Astride Traveler,
Heard his gray hosts too
Now calling loudly for reserves.
In the twilight the gray line held,
Stunned, disheartened,
Stood fast in the grip of the blue.
Here upon the green hills,
A peerless badge of courage,
Was stamped and sealed,
Upon the North, upon the South;
Measured by the will to conquer,
Reckoned by the will to die.

* * *

Over the field of carnage,
Night drew its darkened curtain,
Flashing here and there with musketry;
Then died away,
In the moaning and anguish,
Of broken men.
Human flotsam,
Human wreckage,
Crushed and torn by living men.

* * * * *
* * * * *

AND OTHER VERSE .

HYMN OF COURAGE

Give me not the strength of giants,
Steel me not in ways of carnage.
Show me justice,
Teach me duty,
Give me courage in simple things.

* * *

Keep me from the ordeals of battle
Save me from the lust of killing.
Hold back my hand,
Preserve my brother,
Give me courage in peaceful ways.

* * *

Free me from the blight of hatred,
Foul not my heart with wrath.
Keep me from bitterness,
Abstain me from lust,
Give me courage 'gainst the cup of hate.

* * *

But if perchance a cause arises,
Needs me to right a grievous wrong;
Grant me power,

THE VOICE OF THE NATION

Will me sacrifice,
Give me courage like leaping fire.

* * *

Exalt me in my path of duty,
Illuminate my way to right.
Then if I tread the trail
Across the fiery field of battle,
Give me ample courage to the end.

* * * * *

* * * * *

PRELUDE TO THE THIRD DAY

Out of the reaches of heaven
Floated the breezes of night.
Swept back the fiery sulphur,
Cast off the battle's fumes;
Sweetened the air,
With the breath of winds,
Enfolded the scars of the bitter day.
From the distant far away,
Drifted peace and silence.
Out of the very nearness,
Echoed the dreadful conflict.
Smoking earth still flaming,

AND OTHER VERSE

Foul with refuse of battle,
Reeking with blood of men.

* * *

Behind the battle ridge,
Lay a great amphitheatre,
Lighted by innumerable camp fires.
Here were gathered the blue reserves;
Artillery, infantry, wagons,
All strangely commingled.
Winding its way across the arena
A tired brigade,
Disappeared in the shadow of trees.
Across the half lighted stage
Passed generals,
Youthful aids,
And hurrying couriers.
Privates with bloody bandages,
Limped slowly,
Bearing proudly their badges of battle.
Comrades bended over embers,
Boiled their coffee,
Counted aloud their missing mates.
In the fire light,
All was real, all was living,
Life was a vivid thing.

THE VOICE OF THE NATION

Out in the moon light,
These passing actors,
Moved like phantoms in the play.

* * *

Other phantom figures too were abroad,
Moving with stealth and silence,
Down in the valley of conflict.
Their arms were stretchers,
Their deeds were those of mercy,
Their labor that of love.
Across the field of battle
Moved the stretcher bearers,
Men in blue, men in gray.
Bearing silent forms,
From the carnage in the Peach Orchard,
From the blood stained Wheat Field,
From under broken caissons and shattered guns,
From the slopes of the Round Tops;
Out of the crevices of Devil's Den.
Every house, every barn, every porch,
Every shadowy tree sheltered the
wounded,
Edifices for shattered men.
Under flickering lights,
Surgeons worked tirelessly, swiftly,

AND OTHER VERSE

Over the bloody forms,
Through the long weary night.

* * *

Whilst this night the armies slept,
Weary from fighting,
The nation was wakeful and anxious.
Up in the granite mountains,
Out on the western plains;
Everywhere distress, uncertainty.
Mothers stole from sleepless beds,
Kneeled, prayed for their boys.
Lincoln, the Great Heart,
Paced his sleepless chamber,
Bowed with grief and care;
Anxious for the wounded nation,
Sorrowing for the wounded men.
Rising above his great afflictions
Came his cry of anguish;
"God save the Union."

* * * * *
* * * * *

THIRD DAY'S FIGHT

"On guard!"
Was the pass word of the night
Stamped on the hearts of watching armies.

THE VOICE OF THE NATION

On guard,
Startled generals, and privates,
Each alike prepared and ready.
On guard,
Hastened cavalry and cannon
To the fields still aburning.
On guard,
Kept the pacing sentry,
Awake, alert and ready.
On guard,
Quickened pulse of marching soldiers,
Hurried them to their comrades calling.
"On guard!" "On guard!"
Cried aloud each passing breeze
To the nerve racked men.
On guard,
Saw they the blood red curtain
Rise on the fields of Gettysburg.
Two days had the carnage lasted
Now the third was ushered in.
Ushered in with thundering cannon.

* * *

Across the valley beneath the oaks
Of Seminary's gentle ridge
Strange things were happening
Evil shadows of events to come.

AND OTHER VERSE

Behind the leafy screen,
Dense and blinding,
Formed a gray battle pageant.
Rows of cannon were foremost,
Line upon line of fighting men,
Formed to the back of them.
Drums there were but none beating,
Flags, but none flying,
Swords, but none flashing.
A silent massing,
A mysterious gathering
Menacing and cruel.

* * *

"What of the oaks?"
Asked the general in blue.
"Filling with cannon,"
Answered his scout at ten.

* * *

"What of the oaks?"
Asked the general in blue.
"Filling with men,"
Answered his scout at eleven.

* * *

"What of the oaks?"
Asked the general in blue.

THE VOICE OF THE NATION

"Full of cannon and men,"
Answered the scout at twelve.

* * *

Boom! Boom!
Came from beneath the oaks.
Signal guns flashed their message of fury.
Out of their leafy fastnesses
Crashed eight score cannon,
Answering the call.
In the noon day glare,
Flashing meteors broke,
Scintillating and brilliant.
Out of the sky fell fire,
With loud explosions,
Seering and burning.
Houses burst into flames,
Hay stacks flared like torches,
Caissons exploded,
Wagons flew asunder,
As playing fountains arose the earth,
Falling away as receding waters.
Still the shower of iron,
Flung itself from beneath the oaks,
Spread and sprayed like lava,
'Til the very heights were blighted.

* * *

AND OTHER VERSE

Suddenly a change came o'er the scene,
No darting flashes from beneath the oaks,
No crashing in the heavens.

Deepening silence,
Engulfed the land,
A welcome visitation.

Echoes whispered on breathless air,
Floated tremulously along,
Resounded in distant valleys.

Speak treacherous oaks,
Why this peacefulness,
Why this stillness.

Where are the signs of battle,
Where the guide posts of slaughter,
Why this breathless quietude.

* * *

Out of this threatening silence,
Charged forth in splendor,
A battle pageant magnificent.
"Pickett's men! Pickett's men!"
Ran along the hushed line,
As the gray hosts swept forward;
High with hope,
Big with courage,
Exalted on their path of glory.
Battle flags waved,

THE VOICE OF THE NATION

Drums beat,
Swords glistened in the sun.
Stirring was the martial drama,
Unfolded across the valley,
Tragic and impressive.

* * *

Oh! the radiance of the sun
The glory of the July afternoon
And the splendor of the pageant;
Glittering with bayonets,
Shining with color,
Darting with fire.
Fifteen thousand men,
Marching in serried ranks,
Advancing as one line,
Out in the open fields,
All in plain view.
Courage, a surplus of it,
Life in its fullness,
Youth in abundance,
Fearless and strong;
Oh! the courage of men.

* * *

"Guide right!"
"Steady men! Steady!"

AND OTHER VERSE

Commanded the anxious leaders.
"Captains, hold back your companies,"
Was the cautious warning,
As the pageant swept on its way;
Out into the open fields,
Its ranks unyielding
Advanced as on dress parade.
"Steady, men! Steady!"
Were the cautious words,
As though to hold them well in leash.
Men fell forward, crumpled,
But the gray line closed in,
And marched straight on.

* * *

With a suddenness broke a tempest,
A whirlwind of shells,
A hail storm of lead.
Round Tops, big and little,
Smoked and fumed,
As furious volcanoes.
Atop the battle ridge,
Flames leaped forth,
From belching cannon.
Amidst the swirl of smoke
Blue cannoniers shouted;
"Grape, men! Give 'em grape."

THE VOICE OF THE NATION

Blasts of cannon,
Volleys of musketry,
Shrieking shells,
Whistling grape,
Sprays of bullets,
Beat and played upon the pageant;
Crushed, tore and mangled it,
Battered, tossed and crumpled it,
Still it staggered on.

* * *

"Steady, men! Steady!"
Rang out the voice of man.
"Steady, men! Steady!"
Came the rattling voice of drum.
"Glory, men! Glory!"
Spoke the floating voice of flag.
With bowed heads the men strode on,
Facing the leaden storm,
Beckoned by shadowy forms,
Which halted and stood fast,
Where their comrades fell;
While other hosts of shadowy spirits
Beckoned the faltering,
Whispered: "Courage, men! Courage!"
And those whose feet were lagging,
Sprang forward with upturned faces

AND OTHER VERSE

To the virile voice of victory.
Life was a thing of long ago,
Something that once was precious,
But now a bauble to him,
Who had made the great sacrifice;
And hastened to fulfill it.

* * *

So the battle pageant led by flag and
drum,
Crossed the rolling valley,
Staggered up the sloping ridge.
Lines no longer proudly holding,
But a struggling mass,
Which was like unto a raving wraith;
Casting fire at every side,
Taking its glut of blood,
Consuming all resistance.
Upon the blood-soaked embattled hill,
The shattered pageant stood,
A remnant of its glory.

* * *

What, ho! Ye Blues,
What of this crowd,
That's pierced your lines.
Where thy vaunted courage,
Where thy veterans,

THE VOICE OF THE NATION

To block its way.
See ye not
Thy comrades fleeing,
Leaving wide gaps undefended.
Hurry, ye men,
Ere the fiery bolt
Burns its way;
Burns into thy heart,
Seers and tears,
And overwhelms ye.

* * *

From right and left,
Came the men in blue,
Frantic in their haste.
Threw themselves into the *mélée*
Plunged into the open gaps,
Fighting desperately.
Cold steel,
Steady nerves,
Willful, determined.
No musketry firing
No loud huzzaing,
Just resolute fighting.
So the blue reserve,
Fell upon the pageant.

* * *

AND OTHER VERSE

Once more the cannon are quiet,
Round Tops not ablaze,
Even the sky is clearing,
Except for one spreading smoky filament.
Within its scalding folds,
Is the last of the battle pageant,
Fighting as its dying,
Dying where it stands.
Both armies turned in wonder
At the horror of the thing,
That rose and tossed,
On the passing winds,
Hiding the holocaust within.
For beneath this smoking canopy,
Confusion reigned,
Disorder was rampant;
Shouting and crying,
Dull thuds of muskets,
Beating on heads.
Bloody hands,
Bodies relaxing,
Dead men on limbers
Nauseating, loathing.
Sabers flashing,
Bayonets thrusting,
Rammers smashing,
Crashing and cutting,

THE VOICE OF THE NATION

The bodies of men.
Desperate courage,
Boldness and valor,
Multiplied fearlessness,
Resolute gallantry—
So died the pageant.

* * *

Out from 'neath the oaks
Rode Lee on Traveler,
Speaking kindly to the stragglers,
Drifting back across the valley,
Urging them to be soldiers.
But the bleeding pageant,
Passed on by him,
Turned away from fallen comrades,
Broken drums and tattered banners;
Sought the solace of the oaks,
There lay down exhausted.

* * * * *
* * * * *

THE FLAG

Over the field of carnage,
Strewn with muskets,
Shattered cannon, broken wagons;

AND OTHER VERSE

Human wreckage,
Relics of conflict, wastage of battle—
Played the forked lightnings.
Flashed the shapeless things
Wierd and gruesome,
On the background of the fields.

* * *

Lightning, lightning stay a moment!
See the flag upon the ground?
In the glittering afternoon,
This silken banner,
Led men shouting to their end.
Its stars were like unto the heaven,
Up to which men raised their eyes
And blessed them in their glory,
Symbol of spirit,
Symbol of power.

* * *

Lightning, lightning stay a moment!
By thy livid fire, see!
See the staff that lies broken,
'Neath the hero on the ground.
Hear again the shouts of comrades,
As their flag flashed the way;
Silken banner, floating emblem

THE VOICE OF THE NATION

Flying in the July winds.
Every flutter of thy folds,
Was a precious sight to them.

* * *

Lifeless? Inanimate?
Though thou breathest not,
Yet as no man liveth, livest thou.
What eloquence,
Compareth with your flaming tongue
In your speech to fighting men.
Where the pulse of living heroes
Beats the blood
Red like yours.
Where the leader,
Who commands all men,
Beckons and they follow.
Deathless past,
Holy aspirations,
Bountiful justice,
Glowing pride,
High endeavors,
Traditions glorious.
These are your noble texts,
And all the nation,
Hears you speak.

AND OTHER VERSE

Living flag,
Speaking flag.

* * *

Life is nought,
If thy moving spirit fails;
Life is gone,
If what ye breathe is taken;
Life is unavailing
If ye cease to rise;
Life is lost,
If ye fall.

* * *

Tattered flag
Lying all alone in darkness,
Just a silken fabric,
Blue and white and red.
Though the lightning paint thee pallid,
Just a frail and helpless thing—
Hearken! That which thou dost,
Speaks above the rising storm;
Calls from hills and sacred mountains,
Mighty with the voice of justice,
Calls to men and makes them holy.
Glory flag,
Holy flag,
Flag of spirit,

THE VOICE OF THE NATION

Flag of men;
Symbol of ideals,
Symbol of the best within us;
As the rainbow pledges God to man,
So ye pledge our men to God.

* * * * *
* * * * *

THE RETREAT

Tragedy of tragedies,
Hosts of splendid men lost
And victory denied.
Wheat Field slaughter futile,
Shattered pageant useless
Sacrifices in vain.
Ranks decimated,
Guns shattered,
Wastage most terrible.
Gone the will to conquer,
Magnificent in men;
Gone the glowing spirit,
Almost divine.
Ambitions thwarted,
Confidence departed,
Hopeless the end.
Black night descended,

AND OTHER VERSE

Enveloped the army,
Now counting the cost.

* * *

Over-head spread the pall
Darkening the heavens,
Blotting the stars.
Forked lightnings played,
Thunder reverberated,
Through the low hills.
Down poured the rain,
Increasing in volume,
Softening the earth like a sponge.
Beat upon the battlefield,
Beat upon the silent forms,
Beat upon the wounded.
Camp fires were smothered
Embers extinguished,
Blackened, besotted.
Out in the low valley,
Pickets stood guard silently,
Wet and uneasy.

* * *

Within the candle lit tent
Rain soaked and musty,
Generals in gray sat in council.

THE VOICE OF THE NATION

Faced each other for the first time,
Since the tragedy,
Of the grand pageant.
Under the dripping oaks,
Lifted they the veil of the future,
Seeing the end of their cause.
Turned from the council tent,
Carried the message,
Of the retreat.

* * *

As the rain fell,
Every road was filled,
With cavalry, infantry;
Hurrying, hurrying.
Ambulances with wounded,
Springless and ungiving,
Jostled along.
Wagons and cattle,
Horses and men,
All moving silently;
Hurrying, hurrying.
Out in the fields,
Flowed the stream,
Back towards the mountains.
Vague shadows in the darkness
Speded the moving hosts,
Fearful the victors were following.

AND OTHER VERSE

Flashing lightning,
Illumined pale faces,
Painted weird pictures.
On they hurried,
Silently, rapidly,
On through the darkness.

* * *

Away from the scenes of battle
Away from the fiery slopes
Where their high hopes were buried.
Away from their comrades,
Away from their dead,
Hurried the army.
Through the wet night
Through the day,
Fell back the army.
Withdrew into the Cumberland
Then the sun broke forth,
Ending the rain.

* * *

The gray hosts, like a receding wave,
Withdrew from the fertile valley
Until they stood again,
At the brink of the Potomac.
No longer sang they
"Maryland, My Maryland";

THE VOICE OF THE NATION

But in their hearts the smothered cry,
"Virginia! Oh, Virginia!"

* * *

The flood tide of the rains held the
Weary hosts anxiously.

One, two, three days the Potomac
Ran its course.

Then the cover of night descended.

With the morrow's light,

The last drenched trooper,

Stumbled from the turgid Potomac,

Upon the shores of Virginia.

* * * * *

* * * * *

POSTLUDE

July was now abroad,

Burnishing the hills with its radiance,

Tinting the forests with color.

Through the narrow pass,

Winding its tortuous way

Up through the hills;

Toiled the gray army,

A mammoth whose trail led back

To Cumberland Valley.

Its writhing approach,

Was preceded with distant rumblings,

AND OTHER VERSE

Followed by a flood of confusion.
Heavy cannon,
Crunching the gravel,
'Neath their thick wheels.
Empty caissons—
Sounding hollow,
Over the rough stones.
Tramping of feet,
Moving in unison,
Up the steep road.
All man-killing devices
Lurching along,
Hurrying away.

* * *

Beneath the towering pines
Passed a motley review,
The last of the gray.
Tired men stumbled forward,
Weary of traveling
Sore tried of soul.
Warriors with blood stained dressings
Binding their wounds,
Trudged the road.
Stragglers were numerous
Bended their energies
To keep on their way.

THE VOICE OF THE NATION

All moving sadly
All moving drearily
Up the steep pass.
Lee and his staff,
In the evening rode,
Towards the crest.

* * *

Over the ridges the sun is setting
Glistening the green locks,
Of the white birch.
Across the singing brook
Waded again the horsemen
Last of the hosts.
Crushed again the azaleas,
Broke the graceful laurel,
Rode sadly on their way.
In the distance, the horses' hoofs receded;
And the rumblings died away.
Silent were the mountains,
Quiet were the hills,
Except for the notes of soft-throated
birds,
Or the dronings of golden-winged bees.
There was calmness,
There was sadness,
There was peace.

AND OTHER VERSE

GRANT'S TOMB

WITHIN thy vaulted walls dwells
A spirit;
A visualized memory.
Back into the years it hearkens like
A scourging wraith,
Pouring from its wrathful vial—
A holocaust of blood upon the fair
Waters of the Tennessee;
That flames and flares in the trenches
Of Vicksburg;
That withers the pines upon Mount
Lookout;
Reaching its death dealing climax,
Amidst the fiery thickets of the Wilder-
ness;
Stark, blood letting wraith.

* * *

Behold the spirit of man,
The wrath of battle subsides,
The anger of the strong allays;
There rises the triumphal song,
Writ in thy stones,
"Let us have peace."

THE VOICE OF THE NATION

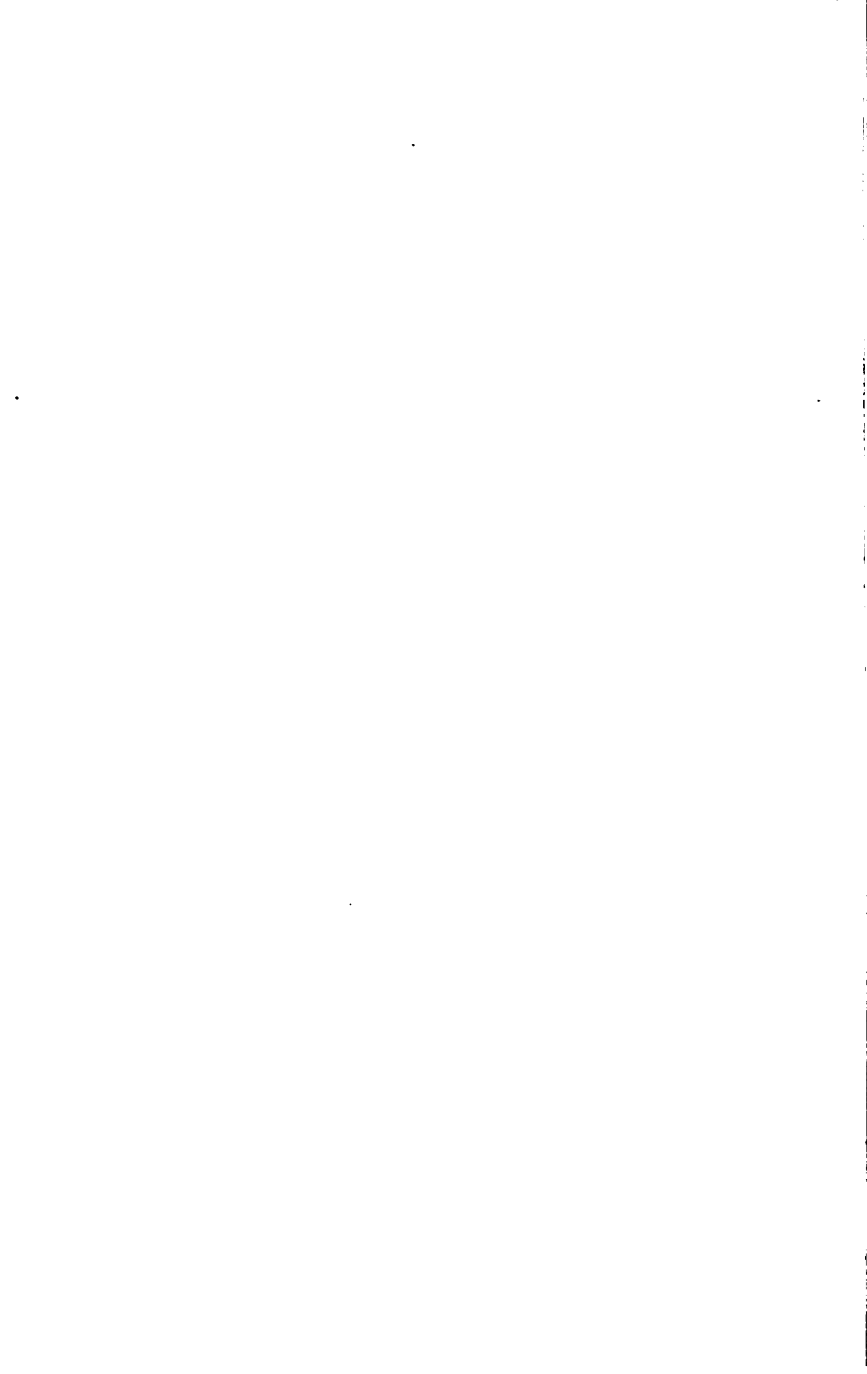
LINCOLN

FROM the soil
He rose to the realm of the wise
And the calmness of the philosopher;
Then stooped to suffer and sorrow
With his people.
As a glowing spirit
Like unto a torch of the Infinite;
A spirit of God,
Speaking from the clod.

THE HUMAN CODE

THE greatest thing on earth is
humanity.
The greatest thing in humanity
Is democracy.
The greatest thing in democracy is the
unselfish devotion of men to each other.







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